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ABSTRACT

Three alternatives for education in the future are presented in the paper, which was initially delivered as a university graduate school lecture. The author first describes three groups of children with different life environments--the advantaged, the silent majority, and the disadvantaged. The significance of possible educational alternatives is then related to the three groups. The first educational alternative is renewed academic planning, holding that there is nothing basically wrong with the present subject-centered curriculum and educational practice. A second alternative is the free-school movement, or the "de-schooled society" of Ivan Illich, proposing a structureless school in which the child guides himself. There is a real potential in the concept of a freer school, which would emphasize choice and individual determination in place of authority and control. However, this existentialist structureless school does not place human development in the proper context of social relationships. The educational system has an obligation to society as well as to the individual. The third alternative is career education, which would give all children the means of coping with the problems of their environment through developing a sense of vocation. (MF)

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL FUTURES:
THE CHOICE BEFORE US

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PREFACE

No single set of standards can define the educational needs of every segment of a massive, geographically diverse, technologically developed, pluralistic society. In a rapidly changing society with a growing recognition of its pluralistic base, it is extremely difficult to settle upon a given direction for any social function. Regardless of our legitimated, supposedly democratic philosophy of education, never in the history of mankind has educational practice been tested in the light of the human needs of a humane society.

Educational achievement has been defined in terms of the quantity of information in discrete subject-matter modules which can be returned by the student as a demonstration that he has "learned" what the school wanted him to acquire. For relatively few students, an alternative was provided in a modest vocational education program. The central question is: How does education help all children become capacitated to live effective, productive, contributing, self-fulfilled lives?

This paper, which was delivered initially as a university graduate school lecture, presents three disparate life views of children in our schools and an interpretation of the significance of three possible educational alternatives for these life views. This paper was prepared during the period that Dr. Keith Goldhammer, Dean of the College of Education at Oregon State University, was a visiting scholar at The Center.

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INTRODUCTION

The evangelistic tradition prescribes that he who would preach a sermon should have a text. Since some of you may obtain the impression that this is more in that tradition than in the realm of scholarship, may I propose a text for my remarks. I take it from the opening paragraph of Urie Bronfenbrenner's remarkably insightful book *Two Worlds of Childhood*:[1]

> How can we judge the worth of society? On what basis can we predict how well a nation will survive and prosper? Many indices could be used for this purpose, among them, Gross National Product, the birth rate, crime statistics, mental health data, etc. In this book we propose yet another criterion: the concern of one generation for the next. If the children and youth of a nation are afforded opportunity to develop their capacities to the fullest, if they are given the knowledge to understand the world and the wisdom to change it, then the prospects for the future are bright. In contrast, a society which neglects its children, however well it may function in other respects, risks eventual disorganization and demise.

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[1] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Two Worlds of Childhood* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970), p. 1.

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No single set of standards can define the educational needs of every segment of a massive, geographically diverse, technologically developed, pluralistic society. No single definition of what education should accomplish will meet with the approval of all groups. No perspective of what interests the educational system of the society should serve will meet with uniform approval. When we expect an educational system to serve the interests of all the people within a pluralistic society, when we expect the schools to be major instruments for achieving desirable social goals, when we diversify curricula and expect the schools to contribute to all of the diverse aims and needs of the total population, then, obviously we are faced with the demand to construct a diffuse educational system, operating under diverse expectations, and pursuing some objectives which some groups in our society may have difficulty in justifying in accordance with their own individual interests and perspectives.

In a rapidly changing society with a growing recognition of its pluralistic base, it is extremely difficult to settle upon a given direction for any social function. One reason for that difficulty is the gulf which exists between the perceptions of social needs and the persistence of established institutional patterns. History tyrannizes over the present, and unless we are careful the present will obscure the potentialities for the appropriate adaptations in the future. One cannot deny that a part of the failure of the educational system to adapt rapidly enough to the needs of the present lies in the persistence of a traditional power structure which has a limited vision of how education is affected by and must be altered to meet the needs of a pluralistic society. The educational establishment itself has been greatly confused in attempting to determine whose or what interest it is to serve. Characteristically, it has tended to watch the shifting tides in the power struggles and, with only a few brilliant exceptions, it has become the defender of tradition, hoping, as it were, that if the pressing, new needs of changing society are not acknowledged, they will slowly disappear. Today's educational dilemma rests upon the discrepancy between what we define as our educational objectives and the persistence of a traditional, inhibited educational system which is largely discordant with our principles.

Regardless of our legitimated, supposedly democratic philosophy of education, never in the history of mankind has educational

practice been tested in the light of the human needs of a humane society. Almost without exception educational practice has been consciously or subconsciously designed to facilitate the use or control of human beings. Through the present moment, education has been subverted into two tracks. The one track has defined what the educational function should be in terms of how human beings can best be trained to serve the ends of the dominating groups of society. Educate children to be governors or train them to be serfs! Divide them between those who have the potentialities to become the rulers or those who must forfeit something about themselves to become the ruled! Prepare them to accept their station in a caste system! Screen the grain from the chaff; provide privileges to some, and deny opportunities to others! Crassly stated, these have been the recurring themes of the educational system.

The second track, which I think has dominated American education, is based on the assumption that if education will focus on a single goal, the process of screening will automatically take place and the ends of those who set the standards will be served without too much violence to our democratic ideals. Elitism can thus be served within a framework of universal education.

In American society there has been a curious amalgam of two sources of elitism. One has been an economic elitism based either upon the inheritance or the accidental acquisition of wealth. The second elitism is one that has arisen out of the nurturing of talent. The first group fostered, in part, an anti-intellectualism but also recognized that it needed a trained talent to serve its ends. Consequently, it permitted the intellectual elite to determine what the nature, functions, and objectives of the educational system would be. The framers of the educational system decided, at least by default, that these would be related to the scholarly objectives of the various academic disciplines, and the schools would be viewed almost exclusively as instrumentalities for the dissemination of knowledge. Educational achievement has been defined in terms of the quantity of information in discrete subject-matter modules which can be returned by the student as a demonstration that he has "learned" what the school wanted him to acquire. For relatively few students, an alternative was provided in a modest vocational education program. The curriculum was bifurcated into a prestigious academic track and a low-level vocational track for the academic casualties.

As we exercise the options ahead of us in determining what shall be the nature of the educational system of the future, I think we must look at this paradigm of the educational system in terms of how well it serves the diverse human needs of our pluralistic population. The task of curriculum reconstruction in this time is that of redefining the school with respect to the human needs of <u>all</u> children of our society. The central question is:

How does education help all children become capacitated to live effective, productive, contributing, self-fulfilled lives?

Typically, the policy-makers of the American schools have assumed that the students worth educating are socially and culturally homogeneous. The school has been conducted as though the social and cultural differences among students can be "spun out," and that this can be accomplished by placing all of the students in an homogenizing centrifuge of legitimated social values and aspirations. But, contrary to expectations, this is exactly what has not taken place. It has been discovered through the bitter experience of many children that this process has led to the schools' reinforcement of the status and privileges of a particular segment of the community, that the expectations of the school have served the needs of those who are powerful in social affairs. While the schools have served some children well, they have cast out those who have come to it with the greatest needs and the most severe deprivations.

Before presenting three alternatives for education in the future, I would like to present first, three disparate life views of children in our schools, and, then, see if we can interpret the significance of three possible educational alternatives for these life-views. I should like to give notice that I have considerable reserve about social typologies and schematics. They, too, tend to create stereotypes into which it is convenient to characterize human beings. In presenting these life-views, I do not intend to characterize any class, ethnic, religious, or racial group. I present them to show the range of human needs to which the schools must relate and as possible classifications through which relevant data can be organized. If they serve this end, they are useful even if there is danger in someone's assuming that a typology can adequately describe all the diversifications which exist among children.

In the first group are those children who are reared in an environment which encourages them to believe that the objective of life is to work hard, sacrifice the joys of the moment, and indulge in rigorous self-discipline so that one can achieve the highest competence of which he is capable. As a reward for his sacrifices when he is young, in his adult life he can gain positions of high social prestige and acquire great economic rewards. The home environments in which these children grow to maturity are replete with the kinds of objects which are legitimated within the school. They see their parents enjoy, use, and prize those things that are the objects of instruction in school. In striving to achieve their own adulthood, they see that mastery of school subjects will lead also to their independence, affluence and satisfactions.

Children who have learned to live in this environment and accept its values and aspirations tend to become the schools' intellectual elite, the high achievers, the winners of prizes and awards, the models of accomplishment who bring honor and prestige to the school, and the highly motivated who go on to college and graduate schools. They tend to become fiercely competitive, aggressively individualistic, disdainful of those with lesser capacities for achievement, and vocal in their demands for a curriculum adapted particularly to their own needs. Their demands are reinforced by their parents who occupy positions of prestige and influence in the community. It is from the power-seekers of this group that most of the members of school boards and other governmental agencies are recruited. Children are aware of the statuses of their parents, who let them know that their achievements are the result of their conformity to the requirements within the school. The children have been made aware that similar behavior will reap the same rewards.

These youngsters and their parents frequently cause difficulties for the school. First, these parents generally provide opportunities for their children which either interfere with the school routines or which extend the experiences related to school studies far beyond the matching ability of the school. It is not uncommon for the parents of these children to view teachers as inexperienced, limited in their cultural understandings, dull, uninspired and untalented. Children take on the attitudes of their parents, and it is often difficult for teachers to maintain their control and authority over these children.

Second, these children come from homes where they are prized for what they accomplish more than for what they themselves are. The home is frequently parent-centered. Because of the range of social and professional activities in which they engage, parents may have little time for their children, even though they support them lavishly. These children frequently rebel against their parents, school, and society. These are the students who are most likely to "cop out," seek excitement through drugs, become weary of the super-conformist requirements of their homes and schools, and join the counter-culture.

II

The second group of children are reared in an environment from which they learn that a primary means to happiness is to find a secure job which provides adequately for their subsistence, which permits them to enjoy modestly some of the luxuries and most of the comforts of life, and which enables them to live in self-respect without imposing upon their neighbors. Their life style dictates that they should be able to provide for emergencies and be self-sufficient, but excessive drive or ambition, or wanting too much, lead to conflict and tension. It is better to let others assume the hazardous positions of leadership in human affairs. For the most part these children enjoy the love and concern of their parents, who generally lack excitement in their own occupations and have time to center their concerns on their children. Their parents ask little of them and are satisfied if they obtain affection and proper behavior in return. Like their parents, these children avoid conflict. They are followers, not leaders. They tend to be accepting and yielding. They infrequently question traditional values. As far as reasonable, they conform to expectations held for them. They play the game according to the rules. They belong to the crowd, and become part of the silent majority. Only when they feel endangered or insecure do they feel impelled to defend their status or indulge in social action.

These children and their parents seek a continuing equilibrium, and only in crisis can they be so moved that they develop strong feelings on social issues. Some of these children have witnessed their parents, with seemingly no relief from their frustrations, become the dupes of demagogues, even impelled to acts of violence contrary to their basic values.

These children perform average or below work in school. They find school dull and routine, primarily because their homes generally do not provide the intellectual stimulation essential for high success in school. The girls do better than the boys. The girls have been reared to conform to the expectations which others have of them, and their models are their mothers, their female relatives, and the female teachers in school. The boys have been guided by their fathers to respect strength, athletic skill, accomplishment through physical effort. They have also been taught by their exemplars that intellectual endeavors may be effeminate. They stay in school because of the activity programs and the compulsion of the law. These children have learned to value the concrete, the specific, and the immediate, and to avoid the ambiguities

associated with the intellectual or the long-range. In school they prefer the general to the college preparatory curriculum, and they have a tendency to fit into programs that provide immediate job payoffs.

The school and society catch these students, particularly the males, in a serious bind. Their capabilities are such that they could succeed in school, and many do gain honors through the altletic route. But their culture leads them to at least passive resistance to the singular legitimation of the school, namely the processing of all students for college entry. The result is that many of these students drop out before graduation. In early adult life, when economic pressures to support a growing family become intense, they frequently express deep-seated regret that the schools did not prepare them adequately for better jobs.

III

Our third group of children is reared in an environment through which they learn that life is a struggle and society a jungle. One takes what he can get, no matter through what means, and he guards what little he has fiercely, if not savagely, for there are always those about him who are quick to exploit him, to use him for their own ends, to take unfair advantage of him, to hold him down so that they may rise. They are suspicious of people who are different, who have opportunities to which they do not have access, or who have possessions, comforts, and luxuries which their parents cannot afford. Weakness, timidity, and fear are dangerous personal characteristics, because these have resulted in exploitation, denial, discrimination, and mistreatment.

The nights of hunger and cold, the drab and dirty surroundings, the fragmentation, brutality and uncertainty of human relationships, the disorganization of family life, the inconsistency of affection, the early experiences with deprival and want--all help to shape this child into one who knows he has no friends, no trust, no abiding promise, no stake in society worth defending.

Experiencing uncertainty and instability in their homes, these children find it difficult to endure the schedules, passivity, the ambiguous demands, and the intellectual requirements of the school. The school is a strange and foreign environment for them. The legitimated artifacts of the school are not part of the environments of their homes, and the activities in which they are asked to participate in school, and for which they must acquire certain skills, are not the activities in which the significant adults in their environment engage. The requirements of the social setting outside of the school are discordant with the requirements of the social setting within the school. Unready for the discipline, the routines, the expectations of the rigidly scheduled activities when the law says that they must start school, these children tend to drop behind their more fortunate peers and never catch up. To them the school experience means further self-devaluation, failure, alienation, and despair.

Quick to hurt, hard to understand the proffered gentle hand, distrustful of one who would give, for this is a taking world, born to endure the constant presence of human wastage, bankruptcy, mistreatment, and indifference, these children, too, can become in adulthood the prey of opportunistic leaders. In the hope of almost the exact opposite of what they experience lies a potential

relief from the present distress. Their parents rarely, if ever, become respected community leaders, school board members, teachers, or policemen. Society legitimates the same hopes and aspirations for them as it does for the more favored children, but it fails to give them the means for the fulfillment of their dreams. Obviously, some individuals rise above the limitations of their environment. Some modify the requirements of their environments, but they are the stronger and the more persistent. Few can forget the lonely struggle through which they gained their ends.

FUTURES

One could spend a long time discussing what our present school system has done to and for the children coming from any one of these life styles, but that is not my purpose. Any viable educational system must meet the needs of all these children, in terms of their capacitation, not just those who can become the perpetuators of the present knowledge system. I would like to examine what three possible alternatives for the future of education have to offer to the children who come from each of these life styles.

The first alternative educational plan for the future is best characterized as a renewed and vitalized academic regimen. Those who advocate this response to the present educational dilemmas hold that there is basically nothing wrong with the present paradigm on which educational practice is founded. The basic plan of the curriculum, established upon a scholarly perspective of the structure of knowledge, is sound, and the deficiencies of the schools arise from both the inadequacies of educators and the failure to adjust the content, structure, and methods of instruction in accordance with the available knowledge and research on learning and teaching. What is needed now is to bring the content of the curriculum into conformity with the state of knowledge in each disciplinary field, to vitalize the presentation of knowledge, and to restructure the teaching-learning situation so that the schools can maximize the amount of knowledge transmitted to each child. Although there is evidence that the momentum which this movement accumulated during the past 20 years is dissipating, there are still powerful advocates and considerable federal funds devoted to the installation of this concept.

The advocates of this alternative still cling to the subject-centered curriculum. The objectives of education are still expressed in terms of what children are led to do on subject-centered achievement tests. Presumably, on the basis of this evidence, the schools will be evaluated and the curriculum and instructional methods revised. The pragmatic test--quem ad bonum, to what end?--is not a significant question to ask of an academic exercise!

Remarkable advances have been made in the updating of subject-matter in accordance with the new status and breadth of human knowledge. Obsolescent textbooks have been eliminated; new approaches to physics, mathematics, social studies, and the teaching

of language have been developed. Scholars of academic fields, who never before were much interested, have become the continuing watchdogs of the curriculum, assuring that knowledge is maintained in accordance with its contemporary achievements.

Even more remarkable than the revolution in content--which has sadly needed change--are the new advances which have been initiated and promise considerable advantages in the presentation of subject-matter content for the future. The vast network of R and D Centers and Regional Educational Laboratories established with federal funds, with but few exceptions, have not asked whether or not what has been done in schools is that which should be done--they have not, in other words, questioned the basic paradigm on which our present educational system rests. Through research and experimentation, instructional technology and materials have been and promise to continue to be vastly improved to make the acquisition of knowledge more efficient, economical, and interesting, if not more meaningful.

Let us look at the application of the test of adequacy which I have proposed! Consider first the children who come from intellectually stimulating environments! It is obvious that this curriculum will, for the most part, please their parents and gain greater support from them for the educational system. This approach will accelerate their intellectual development, "plug" them into the academic currents at an earlier age, and prepare them better for the fare which they will have laid before them when they enter college, assuming that colleges will change little, if any, in the next decades. For this group, the educational program will not necessarily be more relevant, and it is difficult to say that it will help them find the identity which will sustain them through adolescence and adulthood. For many, obviously, it will not provide the relief from the drug culture and the "cop out" trends which adverse social, political and economic factors in our society have stimulated. The intensification of the intellectual and disciplinary content of the curriculum is not likely to be effective with more than a small percentage of the present population in this group. But that particular segment of the group will be vastly benefitted because the curriculum should deal with lively intellectual problems rather than pedantic pap. This paradigm will lead to a new, better prepared intellectual elite. It may also lead to a further and a more severe fragmentation of American society.

For our second group of students, the intensification of the academic curriculum will probably increase their problems with school rather than direct their educational programs toward more meaningful and significant ends. In part, the effect of this paradigm on this group of students will depend upon the direction which the curriculum takes. Harry Broudy has drawn the useful

distinction between interpretive or descriptive knowledge, on the one hand, and applicative knowledge, on the other. Pure academicism has eschewed the applicative in favor of the descriptive. The intellectual elite in our public schools can be led to the mastery of the descriptive knowledge, and, as previously indicated, a segment of them will vastly benefit from this regimen. The students in our second group, however, will be far more inclined toward the acceptance of educational programs which emphasize the applicative aspects of knowledge.

Jerome Bruner[2] has recently written that he now recognizes that too much emphasis has been placed upon the structure of knowledge without an adequate application to the problems which confront youth. To the extent that the curriculum is flexible, knowledge is applied to current issues, and students are helped to gain the intellectual power to deal effectively with these issues, most of the first group and a sizeable segment of the second group will find improved educational programs from which they will benefit. But even more important than an emphasis upon the applicative is the development of a sense of purpose, and as Bruner now says, a commitment to vocation as the basis for a life style. The intensified, intellectual, elitist paradigm is a curriculum for the conceptualizers but not very appropriate for the activists who have lower tolerance for deferred benefits and ambiguous states of sophisticated analysis.

Dr. William Glasser,[3] in a current article, asserts that the need of the day for all youngsters is, first, to find their identity, and through the discovery of identity, to determine their roles and become prepared to perform them effectively. The second group demands an immediacy of concern about identity and role competence--and herein lies a possible opportunity for the new academic paradigm to which I do not think its advocates have the capacity to adapt. I do not think that the new intellectualist paradigm can meet the urgency of emphasis upon vocation and the applicative demands related to the formulation of life style.

New gimmicks to capture this second group have been formulated to account for their basic lack of intrinsic motivation for the refined academic curriculum. Performance contracting and extrinsic rewards to stimulate motivation toward learning are parts of

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[2]Jerome S. Bruner, "The Process of Education Revisited," *Phi Delta Kappan*, LIII:1 (September, 1971), pp. 18-21.

[3]William Glasser, "Roles, Goals, and Failure," *Today's Education*, 60:7 (October, 1971), pp. 20 ff.

these new gimmicks. But the *Brave New World* promised by performance contracting is illusory--and hopefully so. The external contingencies and rewards are likely to be of short duration. The technology of instruction which motivates through S & H Green Stamps, bubble gum, and tickets for playing the pinball machines will wear thin very quickly. The advocates of this theory of learning have an arrogant, intellectual snobbishness and will soon discover that human beings, even as presumably gullible children, are neither candidates for robotism nor laboratory pigeons in black boxes. There is as much intelligence in our second group of children as in our first, and curriculum makers will have to become aware that not all intelligence is of the same academic mold.

The same things may be said with even greater intensity about our third group of children. Already turned off by a curriculum which is beyond their comprehension and concern, these students require some other alternative to the school system if they are to have an opportunity to build competence to master the problems of their existence. Already "snowed" by a curriculum which is not relevant to the world in which they live, the intensification of its rigor forces them into what they and their parents consider "lower tracks," thus contributing further to their feelings that those who govern the world are indifferent to their needs, that they are not capable of competing with the favored children, that life holds no promise for relief.

I conclude that the massive amount of money and effort which has been and is being turned into this possible alternative for the future of education is leading to dysfunctional results, primarily because it is not realistically targeted toward the needs of most of the children and does not begin with a systematic paradigm of how education can relate meaningfully and effectively to both individual and social needs.

A second proposed alternative is the so-called free school movement. This movement is dogmatically eulogized by such people as Kohl, Friedman, Goodman, Gross, and its most eloquent exponent, Ivan Illich. It postulates the existentialist thesis that culture is tyrant over man, and the school as an instrument of the culture is particularly tyrannical. Illich[4] proposes the "de-schooled society," in which schools are abolished, every citizen assumes some role for the education of the young, and professional educators will set up offices, like the proprietary professions, and those who want their services become their clients. Life, not schools or textbooks, becomes the primary educational agency.

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[4]Ivan Illich, *The De-Schooled Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

Most individuals who propose this alternative are more realistic than Illich. They propose, rather, a structureless school, where the interests of the child direct what he does. They propose a school in which children are guided by their own inner drives and the stimulating environment about them.

This school has an existentialist quality about it. The school must do nothing to impose upon the authentic self, and the individual must find his own authentic self without the imposition of authority or social and personal contingencies, which would, in effect, contaminate his own search for his own identity.

The extremists to the contrary not withstanding, there is a real potential in the concept of the free school--or at least the freer school. It is apparent that the contemporary school, as some critics suggest, has been too much obsessed with the problems of authority and control and has imposed a sullen and apathetic conformity upon those children who have the least potential for rebelling against it. The proposed school would emphasize choice and individual determination in place of authority and control. It would help to build a desirable self-discipline rather than an externally imposed authority. Schools now exist, these advocates hold, to provide credentials, and the program imposed upon the learner is one which meets the externally and irrelevantly derived standards for giving the credential. In the current high school or college, for example, it is impossible to conceive of a student's entering just to take a course in which he is interested, without any intention of proceeding to complete all of the graduation requirements or otherwise conform to the curricular regulations leading to a baccalaureate degree.

The school which is proposed is one in which the student freely moves about to take those courses or engage in those experiences which are satisfying to him, for which he sees some need, which offer him something he can value. The extreme advocates do not suggest a structure--for all structure is an imposition upon the self-identity of the individual. The less extreme suggest a modified structure which may do little more than separate the school program into basics required of students or at least strongly advocated, and exploratory, or some other term, in which the student has a considerable freedom of choice.

The suggestion is not new. In at least one way, it is an extension of the elective system which developed in American schools around the turn of the century, but with which American educators have never realistically come to grips. In fact, one of the criticisms of the contemporary educational practice by members of this group is that the elective system is gradually disappearing as paternalistic and empire-building faculties want students to take excessive amounts of work in their particular fields--because it is good for them or they need it in later life.

The racket of getting new recruits and building departmental treasuries of student credit hours is one of the chief contaminating elements of the modern school or college against which the freedom movement strives.

I find it more difficult to assess how these proposals pass the pragmatic test which I have proposed. The reason for my difficulty is that these critics, regardless of the merits of their recommendations for revolution or reform, have dissected the American educational system fairly realistically and laid bare the actual state of its organic pathologies. They view the American educational system as one in which polite and sometimes ruthless rituals are played, and they want education which is more than the playing of games, more than the usurpation of time, more than custodial, in fact, they want an educational system which helps individuals become truly self-realized, authentic human beings.

But I think they fail for each of our groups in almost the same way as did the first alternative. As I. B. Berkson[5] has so eloquently suggested, a realistic educational plan must be built upon a triune conception. This triune conception involves the development of an educational system which puts into proper perspective the relationship between a concern for the individual, a recognition of the imperative of his living within the context of an existing society, and the realization that man regulates his personal and social life through values and ideals, which are the marks of a civilized society. Berkson holds that no educational system is complete or acceptable unless it can deal with these three elements--the individual, the community, and the ideal. Man's fulfillment qua man is the objective, but that fulfillment cannot take place in a vacuum. The context of man's fulfillment is of essential concern to the educational system.

Herein, I believe, lies the failure of the existential school as a viable alternative for the future. It does not place the development of the authentic man in the proper context of human and societal relationships through which his authenticity as man is tested and revealed. The school has an obligation with respect to that context as well as to the individual, because it is within that context that the individual comes to recognize what is relevant and important to him. Romanticism of the young and the old, whether in the liberal or the existential traditions, stimulates glorious rhetoric, but we are not about to abolish society. Unfortunately, society does establish some zones of tolerance in which man's freedom and authenticity are circumscribed. It is inevitable that our students from all three life styles face up to this reality. The educational system which will meet their

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[5] I. B. Berkson, *The Ideal and The Community* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950).

needs is one which helps them cope with this reality rather than encourages them to try to escape from it.

In fact, let me suggest a warning. I believe it was Santayanna who said something to the effect that men who do not understand history are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. Those who seek escape from the responsibilities of the community and its value systems become the most ready victims of those who have learned how to use the instruments of society. The Hitlers, the Mao-tse-Tungs, and the Wallace's are not escapists--they know how to use powerful mechanisms of control to capture those who are. Although those who have suggested the existential freedom school are deeply concerned about the plight of our third group of students and seek relief for them, their solution will, I am sure, lead to their further victimization. It will not serve them well merely to change the establishments to which they are subordinated.

Herein is suggested the key word which I think describes the third educational alternative. The key word is capacitation. The advocates say what is needed today is an educational system which results in the capacitation of all children so they can cope with the problems of their environments, so they can cope with their own problems as human beings growing to maturity in the context of a particular society, so they can discover their own identity and authenticity within the contextual framework in which they live their lives. The proposed embodiment of this new alternative is career education.

There is an impressive amount of evidence to sustain the assertion that the individual discovers his identity and develops his powers to cope with the conditions of his existence through his acquiring, as Bruner suggests, a sense of vocation. This mundane assertion may be debated by many in the academic community, but if we examine the full connotation of the concept of vocation, I am sure we will find that this is not a simplistic definition of reality. One finds his identity and his authenticity as a participant in human affairs through his vocation, career, or calling. Vocation, in this sense, relates to one's responsibility and mission in life. In this perspective, a central purpose of the school is to help each child find his unique sense of vocation or career. This is the school's central obligation both to the child and to the society which supports and sustains it.

Career education is formulated on the proposal that the objective of the school is more than the dissemination of knowledge. Its central focus is the development of human beings who can cope with their life problems and become effective participants in society. Knowledge is surely instrumental toward these ends, but it is not an end-in-itself. The advocates of career education hold that the effectiveness of the schools cannot be measured in

terms of standardized achievement tests, nor in terms of how much knowledge the students can return to the teachers, nor what credentials the students have acquired. The test of the school's effectiveness must be in terms of whether or not it has helped each child discover himself, what he is good for, how he can achieve his self-fulfillment, and how he can contribute effectively to his fellow men, in other words, the extent to which each child has developed his own sense of career and vocation.

The manner in which this curriculum will be organized is not entirely explicit, but certain characteristics are emerging.

1. The central focus of the instructional program is upon the discovery of self in relation to the world of work. The weight of sociological evidence points to the conclusion that man, through the ages, has found his identity in the occupational career in which he is engaged. One of the most serious deficiencies of the present curriculum is that it has either avoided the issue entirely or it has assigned individuals to levels of careers in a discriminatory fashion based presumably upon where the individual fits into the academic or social prestige hierarchies. But contrary to the academic ethos, not all college professors are geniuses and not all janitors are dumb. They have probably been assigned to their roles on the basis of social class, economic status of their parents, race, religion and circumstances of childhood more than because of any innate intellectual characteristics which they may possess. The advocates of the career curriculum believe that if we begin in the kindergarten to develop a sense of self in its true dimensions within the context of the widening horizon of vocational opportunities, we can help develop a system where these choices are made on the basis of intelligence rather than a discriminatory basis.

2. Schematically, the curriculum will probably be divided into four elements, although hopefully these will be interlocked and almost indistinguishable in the manner in which the educational experiences of students are structured. These elements are, first, those educational experiences which help the student develop an understanding of and power over self--in other words those elements of the curriculum which help to capacitate the student in his self-understanding and in the performance of his personal roles. The second element of the curriculum is that which helps the student select an occupational career and become capacitated to perform in that career at his highest level of capability. The third element of the curriculum will be those supportive, exploratory and personal interest areas which give the student a foundation for his decisions and skill development in preparation for his other life roles. And the fourth area of the curriculum includes experiences in those aesthetic, physical, expressive, and religious activities which help the individual shape and determine his total perspective toward the problems of his existence.

3. This curriculum will focus upon the individual and his needs. The advocates of this curriculum hope that they will be able ultimately to develop a clinical model of the school where the program is totally adapted to each child's interests, aspirations, and developmental concerns. Since the focus of the curriculum is upon the capacitation of the child, there need be no statement of graduation requirements, subjects to be mastered, or credits to be earned. The success of the instruction is in terms of what the child is capacitated to do, to perform, and to become.

4. Finally, there is no bifurcation of the school program into the academic and the vocational. There is no tracking to place some students in the high reward system and some in the system which is good enough for the drones of society. The career focus is as applicable for the student destined by interest and capacity for a professional career as it is for the child who wants to become a mechanic or carpenter. There need be no invidious comparison. Each career is equally necessary and valued.

The pragmatic test is still to be applied to this model, for it is just emerging under the stimulation and financial support of the federal government. To predict what this alternative might do for each group of students would be to invoke the self-fulfilling prophecy, because the objective is precisely to do for all children and youth what the present program does not do--namely, make their educations relevant in terms of their anticipated adult roles, to help them achieve an understanding of self and acquire the competence through which they can cope with the environment without sacrificing their own authenticity. The career education presupposes that the instructional program will be of maximum flexibility so that it can be adapted for each child, regardless of what his needs may be. The hope and the promise for its accomplishing these ends are great, but it remains to be seen whether or not the system can be appropriately adapted.

Can educators change the paradigm upon which their professional training has been based? Can the establishments of our society accept the tenets of an educational system which disregards class distinctions and, finally, is developed to promote a true social equality rather than an aristocracy of intellect and economic privilege? Can those who challenge the present establishment give up their dreams of utopia and bend their efforts toward the accomplishment of a practical and realistic approach based upon a new, structured approach to education? Will the underprivileged assist in the development of an educational system which gives promise of meaningfully meeting the needs of all children regardless of the present conditions under which they live? Can we change an educational system that has been built upon privilege and screening out to one which has a clinical perspective, treats all problems without respect to prejudicial attitudes, and is designed to open doors and provide opportunities--to plug people in instead of screening them out?

If these ends can be accomplished through this new paradigm, then I suspect that we shall have not only an educational system which is relevant to the life styles of all children and adults but also an educational system which makes possible a more humane, a more truly democratic society. The ends seem worthy of the effort.